DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 250 393 TM 840 745

AUTHOR Stiegelbauer, Suzanne M.
TITLE Community, Context, and Co-Curriculum: Situational Factors Influencing School Improvements in a Study of High Schools. R&D Report No. 3186.
INSTITUTION Texas Univ., Austin. Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (68th, New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Change Strategies; *Educational Change; *Educational Environment; Research Needs; *Secondary Education; Social Influences
IDENTIFIERS Research on the Improvement Process Program

ABSTRACT

The nature of the changes occuring in the high school, and the factors influencing the change process in different high schools across the nation, have been the focus of research being conducted by the Research and Improvement Process (RIP) Program of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. The study is designed to describe the types of changes occuring in the sample high schools, the units of change, the management of change factors, and the key situational factors influencing these efforts. This paper describes the situational factors viewed by the research staff in the High School Study. It also presents some examples of how these factors vary in their influence in different situations. Some factors were found by researchers to have more characteristic influence across cases than others; others varied more across sites. In every case, however, factors such as the nature of the change itself and its management by school leaders were found to be important to the total picture. The paper concludes with a preliminary analysis of the relation of different situational influences to the effectiveness of change efforts. (BW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED250393

COMMUNITY, CONTEXT, AND CO-CURRICULUM: SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS IN A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Suzanne M. Stiegelbauer

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

O. H. Dam

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Research and Development Center for Teacher Education
The University of Texas at Austin

TM 810 745

R&D Report No. 3186

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the
American Educational Research Association
New Orleans, Louisiana
1984

COMMUNITY, CONTEXT, AND CO-CURRICULUM: SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS IN A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS[1,2]

Suzanne M. Stiegelbauer

Research and Development Center for Teacher Education
The University of Texas at Austin

Change in any school situation does not occur in a vacuum. Much of the literature attempting to address the nature of the high school has characterized it in terms of its social and developmental function for students in their transition to adulthood. In this sense, the high school has not "changed" from the "old days". High schools are often still the last chance for students to learn the social and informational skills necessary for them to be a part of the greater society.

Yet current national re-emphasis on achievement and academic development has raised the question of how, or if, high schools are making the changes necessary to meet the needs of students and society today. Popular mythology has portrayed the high school as an archaic, overgrown educational system caught up in the structures of the past. A view of the kinds of changes occurring in the high school and the ways that various high schools have responded to internal and external changes made in an effort to balance out student needs and other influencing factors is important to a better

---

[1]The research described herein was conducted under contract with the National Institute of Education. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education. No endorsement by the National Institute of Education should be inferred.

[2]Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April, 1984.

understanding of the change process as a whole, as well as the impact such factors can have on that process.

Background on a Study of Change in High Schools

The nature of the changes occurring in the high school and the factors influencing the change process in different high schools across the nation, has been the focus of research being conducted by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, Research and Improvement Process Program (RIP). The study describes the types of changes occurring in the sample high schools, the units of change -- individual, departmental, schoolwide, district, or larger -- the management of change efforts, and the key situational factors influencing these efforts. Rather than starting from a pre-conceived notion of what the high school is or should be, the RIP High School Study is based on descriptive data of change as it occurs in a high school. Each high school visited represents a unique set of information.

The RIP Project's Study of change in high schools was planned to cover a range of schools and situations over a three year period. Phase I, conducted in 1982-83, was an exploratory effort in which researchers visited 11 selected schools to become familiar with the high school context and to pilot data collection methodologies and specific interview questions. Phase II, conducted during the 1983-84 school year, is a descriptive investigation of selected high schools in nine districts geographically dispersed across the nation, including two schools in each district (n=18). These nine sites include a range of community types including urban, suburban, mid-size city, and rural. The size of the high schools visited varied with the nature of the community type. Phase III, 1984-85, will be an intensive year-long investigation of the change process and how it is managed in a small number of selected high schools.

Within each district site, the two schools were visited by two researchers for two days each. The schools were selected by the Central Office person(s) who served as the district contact. One school chosen was that judged by the district to be the most changing in the district (as much as possible with value being put on the word 'changing'), while the other is a school that is typical of high schools in the district. During the two day visit to the school, researchers assigned there worked together and independently to interview a wide array of persons at the school using role specific interviews. These included the principal, assistant principal for instruction, department heads, teachers, students, activities coordinators, and other both in the school and the central office. Approximately 25 interviews were conducted in each school. In addition, demographic information was collected about each school and district.

The role specific interviews used to collect data were designed to reflect the four main study questions and subquestions (Figure 1). At the conclusion of each visit, each researcher completed a four part data reduction write-up packet. The sections in the packet correlate with the four basic study questions, providing a means to focus the information obtained through interviews and observations for further data analysis. This procedure allows for documentation of the different perspectives of the two researchers about the school. In addition to the write-up packet, taped debriefing sessions were held between researchers at a school and the four researchers comprising the research team at the site (two schools at each site, two researchers at each school). Highlights of these discussions were transcribed and are a part of the data base for analysis. For more information about methodology, both as used in the schools and for analysis, see "Collecting Data in High Schools: Methods and Madness" by Leslie Huling (1984), a paper included in this symposium.

Figure 1

Research Questions for High School Study

Major Study Question: How does change occur in high school settings?

1. What are the types, sources, and purposes of changes in high schools?

A. What kinds and sizes of changes have been implemented recently?

B. Within each school, how many changes are underway at this time (1983-84 school year)?

C. What were the reasons for the changes?

D. Were changes developed more frequently by internal or external sources?

E. Who was the impetus for implementing change?

2. What are the key units of change?

A. Under what conditions do teachers individually make changes?

B. To what extent does the academic department function as a unit of change?

C. Under what conditions do school wide changes occur?

D. What other groupings are involved in change, e.g. grade levels, subgroups of teachers, etc?

3. What are the key situational factors that influence the change process?

A. In what ways does the cocurriculum affect change?

B. How do community values and other contextual factors influence the improvement process in high schools?

C. In what ways do students influence the change process?

D. What are the affects of external agencies on high school change?

4. How is the change process managed in high schools?

A. What do school administrators do to facilitate change?

B. What do department heads do?

C. How does the individual teacher affect and respond to improvement efforts?

D. Are there significant others involved in managing change? If so, who are they and what do they do?

E. What are some of the different configurations of leadership for change?

F. How is change planned for and monitored?

This paper describes the situational factors (question 3 of the study questions) viewed by the research staff in the high school study. It also presents some examples of how these factors vary in their influence in different situations. Some factors were found by researchers to have more characteristic influence across cases than others; others varied more across sites. In every case, however, factors such as the nature of the change itself and its management by school leaders were found to be important to the total picture. The paper concludes with a preliminary analysis of the relation of different situational influences to the effectiveness of change efforts.

What are situational factors?

Question 3 of the main study questions asks: "What are the key situational factors that influence the change process?". For the purposes of the High School Study, situational factors were defined as those conditions or changes in conditions that are a potential stimulus for or influence on change in the school. The use of a concept of situational factors and their influence as a part of the High School Study stems from an investigation of the nature and role of "context" included as a part of the planning and design for the Principal-Teacher Interaction Study (PTI), conducted by the RIP project over the years 1979-1982 (Hall, et al, 1982). The question of context and its effects has presented a dilemma for research in education. While the fact that it has effect cannot be denied, its variability over different situations has made context largely unmeasurable and unpredictable. In reviewing what context might consist of, and in delimiting variables that compose it, research staff hoped to begin to see its influence at least in terms of study questions.

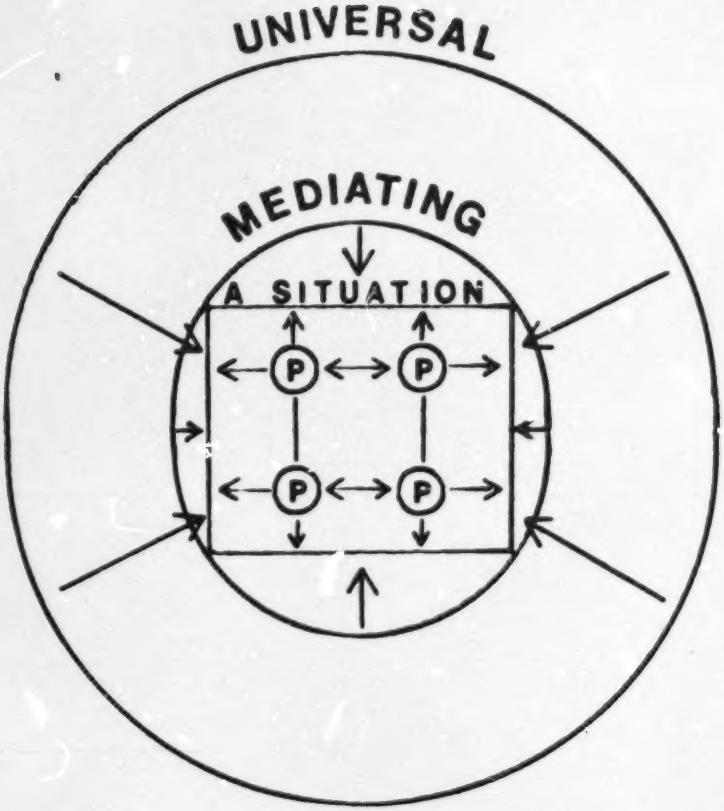
Overall, context could be described as the universe of variables and factors that can influence a change effort. It encompasses things, people, and environments and their interactions and influences on each other. In its

absolute, it encompasses the world. For a particular context or working situation, it can be narrowed by a selection of variables judged to have an effect on selected outcomes. To begin doing this, RIP staff distinguished three types, or layers, of context that may be relevant to a change effort. The first, the universal, represents the world at large that is in any way a part of an organization or user system. The second, called the mediating context, is a subset of the universal system that more directly influences organization or user system behavior. The third, personal context, includes roles and individual life space characteristics (internal memo 9/18/80). All of these interact to a lesser or greater degree to influence a situation or create a particular context (Figure 2).

For the PTI study, it was decided to look at those context variables that would be a part of the mediating context. As the focus of that study was on change facilitation, principal style, and implementation strategies and effects, researchers were interested in those factors that would affect principal and teacher performance and the change effort directly. At that time, they were not as interested in the more general ways the total context might influence the total school. Context questions were included in teacher and principal interviews. These questions asked teachers and principals about factors that influenced them in their use of the innovation, in their role as teacher or administrator, as well as factors that made the school different this year from last. A school climate measure, called the "School Ecology Survey" was also designed for the PTI study in order to get a sense of teachers more general perceptions and attitudes to the school as a whole (Hall and Griffin, 1982).

Investigation of situational variables or factors, and context also stems from the work of James and Jones on organizational climate (1974) and psycho-

Figure 2



logical climate (1979). "Organizational climate refers to organizational attributes, main effects, or stimuli, while psychological climate refers to individual attributes, namely the intervening psychological process whereby the individual translates the interaction between perceived organizational attributes and individual characteristics into a set of expectancies, attitudes, behaviors, etc." (James and Jones, 1974). Organizational climate is loosely what research staff have called context, while psychological climate is the situation or context as it is interpreted in psychological terms. James and Jones' work also included a listing of situational variables that they saw as a part of organizational climate (1974, see Figure 3). From this list of variables, research staff began to construct a list of situational factors that they saw as relevant to what they wanted to know about implementation and change leadership in the PTI study.

The High School Study differs from the Principal-Teacher Interaction Study in that it is a more general, descriptive look at changes occurring at the high school level, how those changes are managed and what factors influence them. As a result the situational factors included as a part of data collection give a sense of the more total context for each school. School participants were asked to generally describe the school and influences on it. Certain participants, selected on a random basis, were asked to describe the influence of specific factors nominated out of context factors used in prior work such as the community, the co-curriculum, etc. on changes occurring in the school. In asking school participants about the impact of each factor separately, research staff attempted to get a picture of how different factors influenced change in different ways. Demographic sheets were collected from each school and included information on resources available to the school, teacher turnover, ethnicity, and student characteristics.

Figure 3

Situation Variables

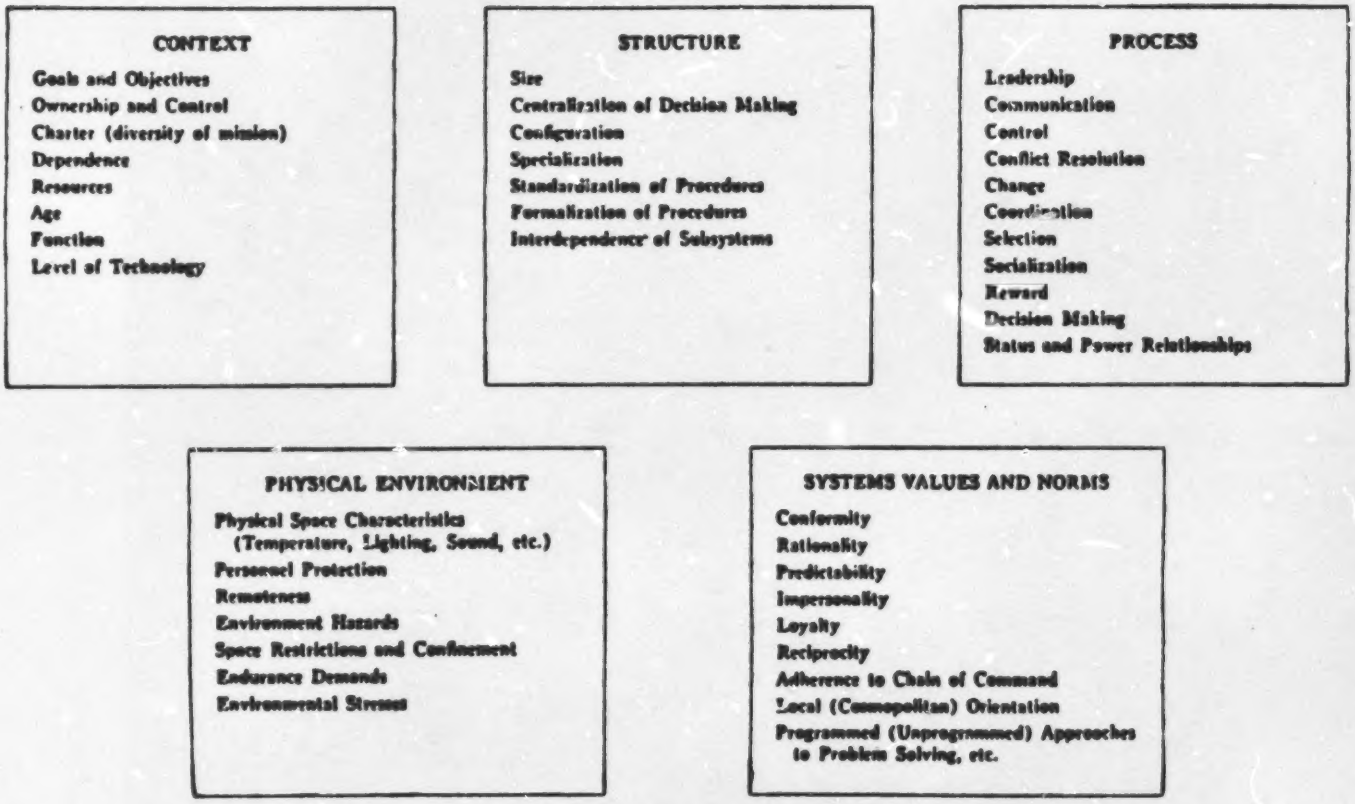


FIGURE 1. Components of situational variance in the total organization, major subsystems, and *1 . . . h* groups.

From: James, L. R. & Jones, A. P. Organizational climate: A review of theory and research. Psychological Bulletin, 1974, 81(12), 1096-1112.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

After a visit to a high school site, researchers at the school were called upon to write a description of situational factors listed for the study and their role in change as they saw it from their interviews and observations at the school. The first part of analyzing each factor was to simply describe what is at the school site, in terms of that factor. The second part was to describe what they saw as the influence of that factor, if any, on change in the school. The factors listed for data analysis are shown in Figure 4. The goal of this approach was to allow researchers to see the influence of each factor in isolation at an individual site and comparatively across sites. Isolation of factors from the total context allowed researchers to see if their influence was similar or different from site to site.

The end result of the data analysis write-up is a descriptive account of the school context as it relates to change and factors in that context that are influential in some way to the change process. This, in combination with other sections of the write-up packet -- the management of change and types and kinds of changes occurring -- present a case study outline of the change process at each school and influences on that process.

Some Examples of Situational Factors

As mentioned above, researchers wrote both a description of the situational factor as it was in each school setting and a description of its role or influence on change in that setting. The following is a sample of two of those situational factor descriptions. A whole school analysis write-up would include each factor shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

SITUATIONAL FACTORS VIEWED IN THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDY

FACILITY (School plant and resources)
STUDENT BODY
FACULTY
DEPARTMENT HEADS
ADMINISTRATION
(Principal, Vice principals, Deans, Secretaries)
CO-CURRICULUM/EXTRA-CURRICULUM
DISTRICT
COMMUNITY
OTHER FACTORS

For each factor researchers wrote a:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION
DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE IN CHANGE
OR INFLUENCE ON CHANGE

also considered:
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Co-Curriculum/Extra-Curriculum

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Major source of school pride is the school band which has gotten more attention than any athletic activity. Teachers feel extra-curricular and student activities let students know about other parts of the world, especially as majority are not academics. Extra curricular is being affected by academics - new academic requirement where athletes could not get an F and play - now have strictest athletic code in district. One-third to one-fourth of students in school involved in athletics. Athletics has different budget from PE.

ROLE IN CHANGE: No strong influence. Necessary outlet for many kids here who are not academics.

Other Factors

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: 1) School day is from 8:30 to 2:03 with no lunch. 2) Budget is allotted from the district for specific things. All the money is designated. Athletic event funds do come back into the school but go to replacing equipment. 3) Staff does not know each other. Communication hierarchical. 4) Little reinforcement to academic achievement. 5) Students feel that their reputation as a 'trouble school' is being held against them -- they can do more.

ROLE IN CHANGE: (As relates to numbering above.) 1) No time to plan or organize things. 2) No extra money to play with. 3) Reduces spontaneity, problem solving, coordination. 4) Negative attitude to what students can do.

Situational Factors at Two School Sites: A Comparative Case Study

While a view of each situational factor separate from the whole allows researchers to see its influence (or non-influence) on changes occurring in the school, it is often the interaction of factors that creates a context that is supportive, or non-supportive to change. In the following case study descriptions the situational factors varying in each school are community, district involvement in change, teachers, and principal/administrative management of change. The factors of students, co-curriculum, and facility had little major effect on change in these schools. Department heads played a role in providing a means to enhance communication between district or school administration and the staff within their own department, or as a part of the teacher group as a whole.

School A:

This school was opened in 1958 in a community that was largely middle class and lower middle class, a mix of Hispanics and whites. Parental involvement in the school has never been strong. Both parents often work. As a result, academic achievement is not a high priority with students or parents and drugs and alcohol are occasionally problems. Student - family mobility is also high. This has never been a high achieving school, only 10-15% of the students go on to a four year college, others go on to two year colleges. The total post high school education includes only about half the student body. Recent years have seen an increase in other ethnicities with limited English. Parental involvement in the school is minimal. The parent-teacher organization is inactive. The principal did make some attempt to communicate with parents by mail.

The principal himself had been at the school four years. During this time, the district has been initiating many changes without allowing time for facilitation and implementation. District staff have been streamlined, placing the responsibility for implementation on principals and selected groups of teachers. The School Board now has in general been supportive. Most teachers have been at the school since it opened in 1961 and/or have been in the system for 20 years or longer. Teachers are also older on the average. Teacher morale was very low before the change in the School Board but is now improved. Class size is often very large.

The major changes in the school are those aimed at improving academic achievement in the district and those concerned with the language and learning needs of a changing ethnic population. The role of the administration used to be discipline and coordination, but is now focused on administrative issues such as funding, attendance, reports and paperwork. Teachers tend to resist change though they are not uncooperative. As many of them are nearing retirement, and as they have seen many changes go by over the last few years, they see no reason to overly involve themselves. They do feel that the administration is under a lot of pressure from the district to make change occur, but say that from a sympathetic distance.

The principal appears to be caught between district expectations and the response of his school and teacher group. He is attempting to repond to pressures from central office, parents, teachers, and students equally. As a result, he is experiencing a great deal of stress. Meanwhile, due to the constraints of the funding cuts in the past and the priorities within the district, the school's schedule has been cut down to a six period day, the various career and vocational programs that would be of relevance to the majority of students have been cut back and are no longer being offered, the faculty are older and resistant to change, and the number of students to whom English is a second language is increasing.

This does not mean that positive changes are not occurring. District initiation of an inservice program for teachers has resulted in at least partial implementation of a number of innovations, including writing across curriculums, and an SAT preparation program. These were implemented through the resourcefulness and acceptance by other teachers of the teachers selected as turn-key trainers for districtwide programs. There seemed to be a subtle power play between the principal's office representing district demands and authority and the teacher group as the long-standing home team. The principal, however, had no overall plan as to how they might be resolved.

School B:

This school opened in 1949 to serve a primarily rural community on the edge of a large metropolitan area. The school was expanded in 1970 and again in 1983 as the community developed into a bedroom community for the metropolitan area and then a major suburb. Presently, the community consists of middle class and upper middle class Anglo professional families. This suburban area is developing at such a rate that student mobility is high - the school is adding almost 200 students yearly. One administrator described the change occurring over Christmas break: fifty students were added, but 48 were lost due to parents moving to another part of the country or being transferred. Parental support is average, though the principal and the district has made a directed effort to inform and involve parents. Academic achievement is neither high nor low, though due to the professional background of parents, there is great support for academics. Student attitude to school is positive despite the constant change in school population. The students interviewed seemed to find the change in population stimulating and accept it as a reality or even a norm for the school. There appeared to be few major problems with students despite high mobility.

The school has seen a series of principals over the last ten years. The present principal has been at the school for two years. There are three assistant principals. The principal has a steering committee of department heads and administrators and an advisory committee of students and selected teachers on a rotating basis. The principal's general approach is one of participatory management. Decisions are made by him after soliciting opinions and through discussion with these groups. The district has gone through a period of streamlining central office personnel and embarking on a policy of school based management whereby individual principals and staff members are encouraged to study and propose ways to better their individual schools based on the particular needs of those schools and district goals. The principal's approach is consistent with this directive.

As district growth has been recent, many of the teachers at the school are relatively new to the district and have been selected because of their high personal and professional credentials. New teachers are expected to have a master's degree and five years teaching experience or the equivalent. Teachers are grouped into departments. There is minimal communication across departments except that which occurs in department head meetings. Department heads are responsible for communication of school and district decisions to their staff, budget and supplies, instructional supervision and aid to staff, and teacher evaluation along with administration. The department head is a formal position in the district. Teachers generally feel in control of their classes and able to make decisions about their teaching. They also feel part of the department and school "team". What misunderstandings or problems were expressed by teachers related to the fact that at times when precedent had been set for their opinions to be listened to, decisions had been made in opposition to those opinions. On the whole, however, they were supportive of those decisions.

The major changes occurring in the school relate to the needs of consistent population growth in the school, district streamlining and emphasis on school based management, and new state requirements. Given the principal's personal approach to leadership, it is difficult to assess the degree of

district pressure for communication and participation within the school and with parents from what the principal might do of his own accord. At the moment, they are in agreement. Despite the pressures of population change and growth, the support of parents and the consensus of students in appreciation of academics is resulting in the school's ability to maintain academic standards. Those teachers and department heads who have been at the school longer than five years are interested in maintaining some consistency in staff and are willing to work with administration to mediate the potential chaos of new students and staff. They wanted this principal to stay at the school. The school, as a whole, is committed to the rationale of working together as a team for the betterment of all.

Discussion

The major situational factors varying in these two schools are 1) community, 2) teachers, 3) administrators and administrative approach, and 4) district and district involvement in the school. The factors of facility, students, co-curriculum, and student body were not as important to the dynamics of change occurring in the school. It might be argued that the characteristics of the student body were more of a factor. However, this was a given more than an ongoing influence. In both cases, the schools were located in districts of approximately the same size. Figure 5 illustrates some of the differences between the schools in terms of the influence of situational factors.

In School A, change centered around district programs essentially external to the school. Ownership of these programs was encouraged by the district through the selection of teachers from the school to act as turnkey trainers with other staff. The district also held principals responsible for the implementation of these programs in the school. Teacher inertia, age, and resistance to change made this situation a difficult one. Some teachers would involve themselves in programs they saw as beneficial, but considered the choice theirs. The principal's inability to establish a sense of school priority, or school consensus, resulted in frustration for all. The lack of support from the community and problems related to a changing ethnicity meant

Figure 5

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCE ON CHANGE	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B
FACILITY	• NONE	• LITTLE-INFLUENCE • ACCOMMODATE GROWING POPULATION
STUDENT BODY	• CHANGING ETHNICITY	• INCREASING NUMBERS IN STUDENT POPULATION
FACULTY	• RESISTANT TO CHANGE	• FLEXIBLE - OPEN TO CHANGE
DEPARTMENT HEADS	• FORMAL POSITION • NO MAJOR ROLE - COMMUNICATION + COORDINATION	• FORMAL POSITION • NO MAJOR ROLE COMMUNICATION + COORDINATION
ADMINISTRATION	• ADMINISTRATIVE FOCUS • OVERWHELMED BY DISTRICT + SCHOOL DEMANDS • TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY • CONTROL: EXTERNAL	• PARTICIPANT MANAGEMENT • INVOLVEMENT WITH DECISION MAKING GROUPS • RETAINS LEADERSHIP • CONTROL: INTERNAL
DISTRICT	• STRONG PUSH • MANY CHANGES EXTERNAL TO SCHOOL • MONITORS	• POLICY INITIATIVES • INTERPRETATION LEFT TO SCHOOL • MONITORS
COMMUNITY	• LOW SES • ETHNIC • UNINVOLVED IN SCHOOL	• MIDDLE SES • PROFESSIONAL • UNINVOLVED IN SCHOOL • INVOLVEMENT GROWING
TYPES OF CHANGES	• MOSTLY EXTERNAL	• INTERNAL + EXTERNAL

that the school had concerns particular to itself that compromised the district's push for high achievement.

In School B, these situational factors operated differently. The district's interest in enhancing achievement was facilitated through encouraging participatory or school based management and initiatives rather than through pressure or top-down initiatives. The teacher group was newer, largely younger, had less history at the school, and were more flexible in their response to change. The principal's personal and administrative style worked well to encourage their participation and flexible decision making, while at the same time maintaining a sense of leadership and direction for the school. The community's professional background supported academic development, despite coordination and growth problems inherent in the addition of 200-250 students yearly. Both the district and the principal stressed communication as a means to facilitate the changes occurring in the school.

Overall School B might be characterized by flexibility of structures, while School A was essentially inflexible in terms of change. In School B, change initiatives were presented and negotiated. In School A they were dictated. Facilitation occurred in both cases to one degree or another. School B was essentially open to working for change; School A was closed to change as it was being approached at this point in time. In both cases, it is likely that there will be some positive outcomes of change efforts, though those outcomes seem to be related to teacher choice and involvement as much or more than to leadership. In School A the community context is more problematic to the district goals than in School B. The constant change in population in School B requires more flexibility in itself. The contrasts in these sites, however, illustrates some of the different ways situational

factors can affect a given context and change effort. Some places can be lead where they can't be driven.

Generalizations From the Situational Factors Data

The previous section describes some different ways the same situational factors influenced changes occurring in those two school sites. The factors having the most influence in those sites - administration, faculty, district, and community - were seen by researchers to have greater variance across all sites in the way and degree to which they influenced the change process. Each of these factors could in themselves be broken down further into smaller or more discrete parts. For example, the influence of the community on the one hand involves the SES and stability of the group and how that impacts the school; on the other hand it involves its dynamic with the school - whether it interacts with the school, in what fashion, and to what effect. School A in the previous description was in a low SES community with language problems and with minimal interaction or support from the community directed to the school. Another school in the sample had the same SES and language problems, but less transience in the community and a great deal more support and involvement with the school to their mutual betterment. It is likely that the other factors seen as having greater influence on the school could also be quantified more than this initial descriptive analysis allows.

Another set of factors viewed as part of the situational data - facility, co-curriculum, students, department heads - were not seen by researchers as having as great an influence on change in the school. Overall, the influence of these factors was seen to be more similar, or characteristic, across sites. The following describes some of the ways these factors were an influence on change.

In general, the characteristics of the student body were usually the same as those of the community. Students themselves, separate from these characteristics, had little influence on change in the school, by their own admission. Students tended to be "changed" rather than effect change, except through the influence of the more general demographic characteristics.

The primary function of the department head, whether an official or unofficial role, was that of a communicative link between upper administration or the district, and the teacher body. How this link was utilized for change, including in this the responsibilities in the role and support for it, did make a difference to change efforts. Department heads themselves usually did not have major impact on changes occurring in the system except as communicators and facilitators within their department. The degree to which they had the time or support to do this varied greatly site to site. As a part of the teacher group, however, they did have an influence. Teachers tended to feel that they did have some impact on acceptance or rejection of change in active and passive ways. Overall, the majority of changes did not come from the teacher group - they came from outside that group and often from outside the school. How teachers responded to those changes was often related to how open they were to initiating change themselves, or how much freedom they had within the structure of the system. This should be further qualified by saying it also was conditioned by their age and historical role in the school. The influence of department heads, however, reflected the attitudes of teachers; as a middle person it also reflected that of administration. The role of the department head and their actions in the school are discussed further in Hall and Guzman (1984) and Hord (1984) both a part of this symposium.

The influence of the facility on change was also related to communication. In general, changes in the facility, or the ambience of the

facility itself did not seem to have a major influence. In most cases, departmental classrooms and offices were clustered together allowing for enhancement of communication within the department often to the detriment of communication across departments. Many schools had become large enough that teachers in different department did not know one another. Faculty meetings and teacher lounges were not sufficient to bridge this departmental gap. Departments varied in character given the interests and characteristics of the teachers in them. Given this, it is difficult to generalize about all departments in any one school.

The influence of the co-curriculum on change in the school was not seen to be as great as first expected. The co-curriculum does influence the hiring of teachers in their coaching assignments and does allow some students (and teachers) to leave school early for athletic or musical events. In general, this did not seem to overly disrupt the academic program. To the contrary, many of those changes described for the school involved increasing academic standards for athletes and reducing the interference of the co-curriculum on academics generally. Teacher and coaching assignments were largely routine, and changes in academic requirements easily negotiated. The press for higher achievement was accepted by athletic staff as well as other school and district personnel. The co-curriculum was found to be very important to school spirit and community involvement, however. If the school had the image of doing well to the outside world in some area - athletics, music, band, theatre, forensics -- usually not academics - then school spirit was high. The co-curriculum was also important to those students who were not academically oriented and as a life-skill and relaxation tool for those who were more academic.

Situational Factors: What Next?

Some of the ideas presented in this paper offer an initial cut at situation analysis in the high school study. Further work obviously needs to be done and initial generalizations from this data tested further. Attention to situational factors and their influence offers many benefits to researchers and practitioners alike. For research, it allows for the separation of some factors from of the morass of context to determine more exactly the nature of their influence specific to a particular context as well as in general terms. For practitioners it allows for planning within a change effort to mediate or enhance the influence of various factors on a change effort. The descriptive analysis approach used in the high school study is a beginning; an end goal would be to begin to quantify, or simplify, situational analysis such that it might be an instrument used by practitioners in assessing the strength of influences in their own situations. The factors described for Phase II of the high school study, especially those showing greater variability will be investigated further in Phase III in order that they might begin to be applied to a situational analysis instrument.

As part of the study design includes the differences between typical and changing schools, one next step would be to assess the character of influences in each of those different types of schools. School A, in the case study presented earlier, is a school selected as typical to the district. School B is one selected as a 'changing' school. Both schools had a number of changes occurring, i.e. there were no significant differences in the number of changes occurring in each school despite their different nominations by their districts. Yet there were differences in principal style, district management and goals, teacher attitudes and backgrounds, and general ambience. What role do these and other situational factors play in a change process and how do they interact with each other to make change more effective, or less traumatic

for a school and its population? How does specification of roles and different organizational structures or leadership styles affect change in high schools? Does a better understanding of roles, organizational structures and situational factors allow for manipulation of the context to enhance the potential of change? These and other questions are a part of understanding the total context of a change effort.

The situational factors used in this study is an attempt to consider factors in separation from the total context without loosing sight of the unique character of that context. It also views these factors in terms of the goal of the study, i.e. their impact on the changes occurring in each school, rather than in more general terms. It is hoped that Phase III will result in an even better understanding of the influence of such factors on change and ways that their influence can be dealt with to positively improve efforts for change.

References

Hall, G. E., & Griffin, T. H. (1982). Analysis of the context/climate in school settings--Which is which? (R&D Report No. 3139). Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas at Austin.

Hall, G. E., et al. (1982). Quantitative and qualitative procedures for studying interventions influencing the outcomes of school improvement efforts. (R&D Rep. 3140). Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas at Austin.

Huling-Austin, L. L. (1984). Collecting data in high schools: Methods and Madness (R&D Rep. 3183). Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas at Austin.

James, L. R., & Jones, A. P. (1974). Organizational climate: A review of theory and research. Psychological Bulletin, 81, 1096-1112.

Jones, A. P., & James, L. R. (1976). Psychological climate: Dimensions and relationships of individual and aggregated work environment perception. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 16, 74-113.